

LINCOLN LEAGUE

"That government of the people, by
the people, and for the people, shall
not perish from the earth."

Government does not rise above the average quality of its citizenship.

The transition of the United States from an agricultural to the greatest of all industrial nations in the last century has brought greatly increased demands upon government. The population has changed in character. The country has grown in size. Science and invention have made life more complex. Operations in every field have been speeded, and the current of national life has reached the rapids. The simple systems of Lincoln's day are no longer adequate. His ideal is more difficult of attainment. Government tends to slip away from the people. Considering the small percentage of voters who participate in the primaries, we now have government by a very small fraction of the people.

Government has tried to follow the development of the country and keep up with the needs of the people. Its participation in their affairs has been steadily extended into fields undreamed of by the founders. It has reached the point where its activities touch our lives at every turn, and where a large percentage of the adult population draw their living from the public payroll. Everywhere boards, bureaus and commissions of many kinds and with great powers have been established to do the necessary work. But government has not lived up to the Lincoln ideal, and cannot do so with our present standard of citizenship and public administration.

Government is likened unto a great corporation, upon which we rely for security of our freedom, happiness, our lives and our property. If we have money invested in a corporation we vote carefully for competent management and administration. Yet, in the greatest election years less than one-half of the qualified voters take the trouble to participate in the selection of the servants who are to handle the public affairs upon which our lives and property depend.

The citizen inherits his share of the vast public property as well as the social order which insures his security. These are blessings unmatched in any country. He enjoys in the present the advantages purchased for him by the sacrifices of the past. His elected representatives and public officials are expected to preserve this precious heritage for his children. Surely he owes it to his country to help in the selection of those officials.

If government by the people is to survive, if a dictatorship of a small minority of office holders is to be avoided, there must be an enlightened and active electorate. The nation's leaders recognize the danger and organized efforts are being made to in-

crease the people's knowledge and appreciation of their heritage, to raise the standard of citizenship, and to induce a wider participation by the electorate in the primaries and elections. Lincoln League will contribute to the limit of its abilities to the success of these efforts.

The other notable weakness in our democracy is inefficiency in the conduct of public business. Citizens complain that from the smallest unit up to the Federal government public business is conducted wastefully; that there are duplication, division of responsibility, red tape, and unjustifiable delay. They contrast it with the efficiency, success and progress of the great private industries. They point out that in exceptional cases where trained men can be enlisted in public service successful administration results. Mr. Hoover and Mr. Mellon are cited as conspicuous examples. They had the training for the work they undertook. The Federal Courts function efficiently because the judges have had the necessary training. Our vast public school system is the marvel of the world because it is in charge of trained experts. The Army and Navy do their jobs well and have never failed us, because West Point and Annapolis have provided the nation with a body of properly trained men.

But in many other governmental activities in county, city, state and nation, it must be admitted that there is much inefficiency due to the lack of trained and experienced personnel. A mere statement of the fact indicates the remedy—training and experience. The rewards of office are rarely such as to tempt those best qualified to enter public service. Thousands of promising students would gladly prepare for service if they had the opportunity and if the tenure of office and the prospects of advancement were made to depend upon competent work. True, some of the universities have inaugurated special courses in civics and government administration. Lincoln League will endeavor to induce other educational institutions to provide such courses. However, these are local efforts, and limit opportunity to those students only who can afford the expense. Furthermore, they fail to provide positions for those who complete the course.

The one great attempt to handle the problem on a broad comprehensive basis is that of Lincoln Memorial University. By the aid of generous gifts from Elbert H. Gary, B. N. Duke, Frank Seiberling, John Hays Hammond, Henry Hornblower, Coleman Dupont, Otto Kahn, Frank O. Lowden, Andrew Mellon, John H. Kirby and other leaders, and with the income from the University's publication and nation-wide distribution of its complete collection of the Works of Lincoln, it is establishing a new and distinctive department of education in government and citizenship to be administered in the Duke Hall of Citizenship. The John W. Weeks Chair of Citizenship will be the nucleus of this national school of government. There will be instruction not only from a regular professorate but from visiting national authorities, the grand objective of which will be to make an applied science of the civic principles of Abraham Lincoln. Thus Lincoln Memorial University

is preparing for wide-spread civic usefulness, offering its services to the nation free of charge for the preparation of young men and women as trained public administrators, patterned after the specialized training of West Point and Annapolis.

To secure only the most promising students and to insure equal nation-wide representation, a committee of the Lincoln League in each congressional district will nominate young men and women to take the entrance examinations, and successful contestants will be awarded free scholarships for the entire course.

Students holding scholarships will be expected to enter public service on completion of their courses, and the League will aid all graduates to obtain proper positions and promotions according to their proven capacity.

The plan is no experiment. It is merely an application of the Annapolis and West Point plans, under the sponsorship and guidance of that element in each Congressional district which seeks to improve the conduct of all public business.

PROGRAM OF LINCOLN LEAGUE

The encouragement of all efforts to raise the standard of citizenship by co-operating with state legislatures, educational bodies, and all organized efforts to promote the teaching of government in schools. To immediately prepare a textbook in Lincolnian Americanism for use in our public school system.

To encourage and foster knowledge and love of our distinctive form of government and by education and all wise and patriotic means to defend it against insidious attacks upon its integrity.

Promote essay contests in the public schools of the nation on Good Government, Responsibility of Citizenship, etc., with the object of discovering the most promising pupils for appointment to scholarships in the School of Citizenship and Government.

To maintain a Speakers and Literary Bureau for the wide-spread dissemination of the principles to which the Lincoln League is committed.

To co-operate in support of Lincoln Memorial University's program of civic education.

To participate through local Congressional district committees in the appointment of candidates for scholarships in the School of Citizenship and Government.

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Munsey Building
Washington

